

# Japan Christian Activity News

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## 100 HOUR HUNGER STRIKE

### OVER 1500 CHRISTIANS STAGE 100 HOUR HUNGER STRIKE

demonstrate opposition to "Daijosai" (the Great Food Offering) and the government's efforts to strengthen the "tenno" (Emperor) system, well over one thousand Christians throughout Japan participated in a 100 hour hunger strike from November 19-23, 1990.

The hunger strike was organized by the C/J sponsored Center for Signature Collection Against "Daijosai." The hunger strike site in Tokyo, located at the entrance of the Christian Center building, was also coordinating as a nation-wide event. Within the makeshift wooden shelter could be found a computer, telephone, FAX machine and television set. From this center up-dated information on the number of hunger strikers throughout Japan and related programs were gathered.

The latest information on the number of participants shows that 1,592 persons took part, with forty eight people fasting for the entire 100 hour duration. 593 people fasted on the 22nd, the beginning of the "Daijosai" festival.

In Korea during the time of Japan's colonization, a hunger strike was held to protest the colonial ruling requiring all Koreans to worship the "Tenno" at Shinto shrines. In order to remember the protest in Korea against the oppressive power of the "Tenno" system it was felt that a hunger strike should be carried out to mark opposition to the occasion of the government supported "Daijosai."

The act of fasting is not only viewed as a confession of faith by the hunger strikers but is also viewed, in the Biblical sense, as a confession of sin. By fasting as an act of protest against the "Daijosai" the hunger strikers are expressing their faith in God and in justice in the face of what many view as the government's attempt to reinforce the "Tenno" system and related nationalism in Japan. Yet their fast is also a confession. During World War II the churches, while victims, were also oppressors, as they cooperated with the government and its war of aggression in Asia.

In Sapporo, a city in Hokkaido, northern Japan, twenty people participated in the hunger strike outside the Hokko Church in bone chilling zero degree weather. Throughout Sapporo alone there were eighty-two hunger strikers.

The strikers drew the attention of the media, as all major newspapers covered the event in articles dealing with Christian opposition to "Daijosai."

The hunger strike has also drawn critical attention. The coordinating center in Tokyo received a call from an angry person who said, "It is a tradition that the Emperor and Empress should be considered our parents."

The reply was "It's difficult to imagine parents spending 12.3 billion yen for themselves while the handicapped and the aged (their children) are having difficulties surviving on such small amounts of money." "You stupid fool," responded the caller, "I will burn you down." (From the 100 hour hunger strike newsletter.)

Lawyer Tsuguo Imamura read the following poem in the worship service at the front gate of the Christian Center building as



the 100 hour hunger strike was brought to a close.

### 100 HOURS OF THE PEOPLE'S TIME

*During the disgraceful 100 hours,  
State authority rides on the living god.  
While brothers and sisters in the Lord  
Ride on a donkey  
Courageously, like Jesus  
During these 100 hours of the common time.*

*Oh, this beautiful morning light  
Have I ever felt in this way?*

#### **STOP THE POWER STATE**

*Let us go forward courageously  
Believing in God's struggle in history.*



### **INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM IN OPPOSITION TO THE EMPEROR SYSTEM**

#### **"DAIJOSAI" CENTER HOLDS INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM**

About sixty people gathered to participate in an international symposium entitled "Asian Nation-Stateism and Human Rights: Ideological and Religious Implications" (see following text).

Catholics, Protestants and Buddhists joined together in this three day symposium together with friends from Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines.

Papers presented by the foreign guests were:

"State Authority and Human Rights: The Case for

Taiwan (A Christian Perspective)," -- Dr. (Paul) Nan-Jou Chen - Taiwan

"Religious Nationalism and Liberation from Historical Experience", -- Dr. Noh Jong-Sun - Korea

"Churches and Nationalism: A Philippine Perspective" -- Fr. Apolonio M. Rancho - Philippines

"Overcoming the 'Tenno' Value System and Liberation from Imperialism" -- Fr. Ham Se Un - Korea

The keynote speech given by the Rev. Moriyama Tsutomu of the "Daijосai" Center traced the history of the events leading up to the formation of the center. He pointed out that the movement of Christians opposing nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine was the seed from which the current movement against the "Daijосai" had sprung.

In his lecture, freelance writer and critic Hanazaki Kohei, spoke of the contradiction between what he termed "particularism" and "universalism" in relation to the constitution and the "Tenno" system. Article 1 of the constitution defines the "Tenno" as the symbol of the state and unity of the people - particularism; while at the same time it denounces war in Article 9 - universalism. This contradiction, emphasizing particularism while neglecting universal principles, is the basic stumbling block to the attainment of justice in Japan. Mr. Hanazaki also pointed out the importance of making links with minority issues and the necessity to build a value system based on a multicultural understanding.

Peace Studies Professor Okamoto Mitsuo touched on a variety of issues in his lecture entitled "'Tenno' System and Democracy." Explaining that the "Tenno" system is based on a myth and not on the constitution Prof. Okamoto said that the system was a threat to democracy. In his discussion of the enthronement and "Daijосai" ceremonies he pointed out the media role in reinforcing the "Tenno" system among the people.

(The word "NATION-STATEISM" WHICH APPEARS IN THE FOLLOWING TEXT IS A NEW TERM. IT REFERS TO THE "ABSOLUTIZATION OF THE NATION STATE AS A POLITICAL INSTITUTION WHICH THEN ALLOWS VIOLATION IN THE NAME OF SAID STATE, OF THE SOVEREIGN RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY HUMAN RIGHTS.")



THE WORD NATIONALISM CAN HAVE BOTH NEGATIVE AND POSITIVE MEANINGS. THE SYMPOSIUM PARTICIPANTS DECIDED TO ADOPT THE TERM NATION-STATEISM IN AN ATTEMPT TO ACCURATELY DEFINE THE PARTICULAR JAPANESE BRAND OF NATIONALISM.) [EDITOR'S NOTE]

## STATEMENT

Between the occasion of the new "Tenno's" enthronement and the "Daijosai" (Great God Offering Ceremony), Japanese and other Asian persons of faith gathered to explore the theme "Asian Nation-Stateism and Human Rights: Ideological and Religious Implications," at an international symposium sponsored by the National Christian Council in Japan, November 15-17, 1990 at Tozanso, Gotemba, Japan. The participants included Christians from Korea, Taiwan and the Philippines, and Buddhists and Christians in Japan, as well as other concerned citizens.

Participants from Korea, Taiwan, and the Philippines, representing countries which experienced Japan's invasion and colonial rule in the name of the "Tenno," joined the symposium. As people from countries which directly experienced Japan's invasion and colonialization of their land in the name of the "Tenno," they expressed great concern about the continuing use of the name "Tenno" so many years after the war, a term which implies deification and promotes discrimination.

Confronted by the imposition of state authority and ultra-nationalism in Japan, through the enthronement and "Daijosai" ceremonies, the participants from other countries expressed concern regarding Japan's aggressive chauvinism which violates the sovereignty of Asian peoples and threatens both justice and peace in Asia and the Pacific.

The Asian participants emphasized that it is an ecumenical and historical task for persons of faith to strive for the human rights of all oppressed Asian people by not permitting "Tenno" system domination, and furthermore, determination is needed to stand in solidarity with peoples of faith in Japan who seek a truly democratic and just society.

Receiving the above challenge, the

following points were discussed.

Exploitation of resources and labor by means of Japan's economic invasion, i.e., economic injustice leads to the support of dictatorships in Asian countries. As a result, the human rights of peoples are suppressed and violated.

In most Asian countries today, the "national interest" is given priority and human rights are neglected. Because of Japan's imperial policies rooted in the "Tenno" system the people of Taiwan, Korea, and the Philippines have experienced great suffering as people who were colonized in the past and who, still today, suffer from discrimination and oppression in Japan through an enforced assimilation policy.

Furthermore, Japan's invasion of and assimilation policies in relation to the Ainu people are a result of the discriminatory attitude of the Japanese government. Migrant workers from other Asian countries, arriving in increasing numbers in recent years, are without basic human rights. Asian women who are working in the sex industry, in particular, are exploited and denied their human dignity.

The Japanese people have been integrated, sometimes unconsciously, into the "Tenno" system, a scheme which restricts basic human rights and enforces strict social stratification. The structure of the "Tenno" system holds them captive to a particular ideology and denies the realization of full humanity.

The structure of the "Tenno" system is undeniably sexist. And, it sacrifices the individual and the family by making these entities of the social order serve the corporations.

Children are controlled and oppressed through the educational system, and systems of control in the schools based on one-sided value systems are being reinforced. This situation must be taken seriously and work implemented which will work toward ratification and implementation of the UN Treaty for Children's rights.

In reflecting on our history we must



acknowledge that Japanese people of faith, who, by neglecting their own beliefs, cooperated in the war effort, promoted "Tenno" worship, and imposed the "Tenno" system on other Asian peoples. People from Taiwan and Korea were recruited to serve as soldiers and many others were brought to Japan to work as forced laborers, often in very dangerous situations.

Some of these people suffered from the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. These atomic bomb victims have not received adequate medical treatment or any other just compensation.

Furthermore, Korean women were also brought to Japan where Japanese soldiers cruelly and shamelessly used them as "comfort girls." Their existence has been erased from the pages of "history."

For forty-four years, from the end of the war until his death, the Showa "Tenno" did not admit his responsibility for the war. Despite this, the imperial throne was succeeded to according to the imperial tradition of hereditary succession, which serves only to reinforce systems of social discrimination.

After the defeat in WWII, Japan was determined in its commitment to renounce war and to build a peaceful nation by abolishing the Meiji Constitution. Under the new constitution Japan set out on a new course toward pacifism and the guarding of human rights.

However, resulting from political indecision on the part of the US and the egotism of Japan's ruling elites in service their own interests, Article 1 of the constitution defining the "Tenno" as the symbol of the state was introduced, and integration of the Japanese nation and people was sought. Thus the spirit expressed in the preamble of the constitution and the principle of the people's sovereignty have been made ambiguous. As a result of this ambiguity the democratization of Japanese society has stagnated and the discontinuity between the pre- and post-World War II periods has become blurred.

In order to protect the interests of Japan

which have accumulated as a result of massive economic invasions, the government is seeking to use the present situation in order to integrate the people into the state by attempting to dispatch the Self-Defense Forces to the Gulf region. This is the situation we are confronted with at the present time.

Following the defeat of Japan during World War II, we resolved never again to repeat the invasion of neighboring countries in Asia and the Pacific Islands; a course which resulted in the victimization of more than 20 million people.

Japan's aggressive posture, once manifested through militarism, now takes the form of economic aggression. In spite of this, in the name of state security various human rights violations are still perpetrated. A people without ethics will be destroyed, and the people who forge history will have no future.

Having discussed the above outline issues, we confirmed the following points:

1. We are opposed to the "Daijosaiai" which is being forced upon the people as a public event and paid for out of public funds.
2. As people of faith, we, the Japanese participants, express our war responsibility for Japan's invasion of other countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
3. We state our opposition to the dispatch of the Self-Defense Forces abroad, and at the same time we criticize Japan's economic invasion of Asia, which is a resurgence of Japanese domination; and, together with Asian peoples, we recognize that the "Tenno" system is a threat to other Asian countries.
4. We are finally awakened to the problem of the "Tenno" system, and we are determined to fight in solidarity with our Asian sisters and brothers in the struggle against nation-stateism.

Nov. 17, 1990



### PRESS CONFERENCE HELD

The following day a press conference was held at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Kyoto. About thirty-five journalists attended the luncheon conference organized by the NCC/J and the Signature Collection Center Against "Daijosai."

Representatives included:

Rev. Takeuchi Kentaro (Moderator, National Christian Council in Japan)

Bishop Soma Nobuo (Chairperson, Japan Catholic Council for Justice and Peace)

Rev. Tsuji Nobumichi (Moderator, United Church of Christ in Japan)

Rev. Okabe Takaaki (Chairperson, Social Committee, Japan Evangelical Association).

Each gave brief remarks focusing on their organizations' position in relation to "Daijosai."

During the question and answer period, discussion focused on the reason for Christian opposition to government funding of events which maintain and strengthen the "Tenno" system, the Churches' confession of war responsibility, and the government's support of the enthronement and "Daijosai" ceremonies and the implications of this support for democracy in Japan.

Eleven major newspapers carried articles focusing on issues raised at the press conference, including the 100 Hour Hunger Strike (see related article in this issue) being carried out by Christians throughout Japan.

### CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE OF ASIA

STATEMENT OF THE CCA GENERAL COMMITTEE  
ON THE GROWING TRENDS TOWARDS  
MILITARISM IN JAPAN

NOVEMBER 21, 1990

The General Committee of the Christian Conference of Asia met at Kwansei Gakuin Seminar House in Sengari, Hyogo Prefecture in Japan from November 19th to 23rd, 1990.

In the meeting we noted with great concern two major events taking place in Japan in the month of November. The first was the enthronement ceremony (Sokui no Rei) of "Tenno" Akihito on November 12, which was followed by the "Great Food Offering Ceremony" ("Daijosai") on November 22nd and 23rd.

At the end of World War II Japan adopted a Constitution which has come to be known as "the Peace Constitution." The adoption of the Constitution was an expression of repentance on the part of the people relative to Japan's role in a war which caused much pain and suffering to its Asian neighbors.

The term "Tenno" is associated with militarism. In the year 1928, when "Tenno" Showa was enthroned, Japan invaded China and other Asian countries. Six decades later when "Tenno" Showa's son, Akihito, is being enthroned Japan is preparing to send forces to the Gulf. This historical coincidence has caused considerable concern not only in Japan but in the region as well.

The attempts made by the Japanese government to strengthen the "Tenno" system, move the country towards remilitarization and expand Japanese economic domination of the region has evoked a deep sense of dismay amongst Japan's Asian neighbors, particularly those that were subjected to invasion and occupation by the Japanese Imperial army.

The General Committee is encouraged by the action of their sisters and brothers in Christ in Japan, who have opposed the re-emergency of the "Tenno" system and remilitarization of their country. The committee affirms and endorses their prophetic witness, and assures its solidarity with and support of them as they seek to be the 'salt of the earth' and the 'light of the world' (Matt.5:13-14).



We pray for God's blessings and guidance on Japanese churches, politicians and people as they work toward a just and meaningful peace.

## COMFORT WOMEN

By the invitation of the Okinawa Peace Center, five women from Seoul, Korea visited Okinawa in order to hold special services for the Korean women who died as prostitutes for the Japanese military during World War II, while three women visited Tokyo in order to bring petitions to the Japanese government.

These three women of Church Women United in Korea, visited the NCC/J Women's Committee on October 29 and appealed for solidarity in remembrance of the Korean Women whose lives have been forgotten within the continuing onslaught of history.

(The following is an excerpt from an article which appeared in November 10, 1990 Yomiuri Daily News)

### KOREAN WOMEN DEMAND APOLOGY

A coalition of Korean and Japanese women's groups petitioned the Foreign Ministry Monday calling on the government to apologize and provide compensation to Korean women who were forced to serve as prostitutes for Japanese soldiers during World War II.

The women, euphemistically called "comfort girls," were recruited by Japanese authorities because they thought girls with a strong Confucian upbringing were likely to be free of sexually transmitted diseases.

The majority of the estimated 70,000 to 80,000 women used in this way never returned home and some are believed to have been executed by the Japanese soldiers at the end of the war.

Three Korean women, representing a coalition of 30 groups, submitted the petition to the Foreign Ministry. They were joined by women Diet members and private citizens who, in a separate

petition, accused the government reneging on a promise to investigate conscription of young Korean women.

Following a visit to Tokyo by South Korea President Roh Tae Woo in May, government pledged to search for lists. Koreans who were conscripted for labor during World War II. The government initially said that women forced into prostitution would be included in a search but later reversed its position in parliamentary debate, saying that the women were recruited by the private sector and were not covered by the conscription law.

Therefore, the government's final report of its investigation did not include women.

Kim Hae Won of "Korea Church Women United" said after the meeting with Foreign Ministry officials that she planned to bring the issue to the attention of the United Nations if satisfactory progress was not made. The women have requested a response by the end of November.

"In the past, the women who were victimized were made to feel more ashamed than their victimizers. We must reverse this," she said.

## RACISM & SEXISM

### A CALL FOR RESIGNATION OF JUSTICE MINISTER KAJIYAMA

At a press conference on September 21, 1990, following a late night visit to a flourishing prostitution area in Shinjuku (Tokyo) where he observed a number of Southeast Asian women, Justice Minister Kajiyama is quoted as remarking that "prostitutes bring down the value of a neighborhood just as American blacks do when they move in, forcing whites to move out." This statement, comparing African-Americans to prostitutes is racist in the extreme and as such has provoked a storm of criticism in the United States.



must speak out at such an extremely alarming statement, originating as it does from Japanese prejudice against foreigners, and emphasize that it is also extremely sexist as it clearly shows Kajiyama's erroneous thinking concerning the basis of prostitution.

Like Kajiyama, most Japanese reason that because there are prostitutes there will be prostitution. Or, that because other Asian women have come to Japan prostitution came with them and is on the increase. This is wrong. From four and half years of experience hearing the stories of nearly 700 women, we here at the Asian Women's Shelter, HELP, can unequivocally say that this is wrong. To counteract this perception we wish to point out conditions that support Japan's thriving sex industry.

Beginning in the 1970's and continuing still today, are the rapacious "sex-tours" taken by Japanese men to other Asian countries and drawing criticism of Japan from those countries. Ignoring the urgent need for legislation to eliminate this practice, the problem continues, and relations with other Asian nations suffer as a result.

In spite of existing laws that prohibit prostitution, punitive measures for providing prostitutes, for offering a location for and/or for running a prostitution business, are not enforced.

According to current, lenient legislation pertaining to the appropriate establishment and operation of entertainment industries, legal recognition allows and protects undercover prostitution.

Tolerance of prostitution among the Japanese public, plus increasing numbers of men who can afford to buy women, perpetuate a cultural acceptance of prostitution. And as a result contempt for women is increasing.

The above mentioned conditions make it

abundantly clear that no effective policy exists in Japan today that addresses the primary causes of sexism and subsequent violations of human rights.

Moreover, the blame for these existing problems is laid upon women who are already in a weak position because of improper travel visas to this country. Treated as the problem themselves, disdain for these women is growing in the minds of the Japanese public.

Justice Minister Kajiyama's statement ignores any recognition or understanding of these circumstances and merely contributes to the strengthening of sexism. It is our opinion that such an appalling lack of sensitivity on the part of a person in the government's highest service and, as the Justice Minister responsible for the protection of human rights, is obviously unacceptable. Therefore, we demand Kajiyama's resignation immediately.

We also insist that the Justice Ministry promptly undertake preparation of legislation that will move toward elimination of the discrimination prevailing in our society.

HELP

Asian Women's Shelter

October 23, 1990

(HELP, House in Emergency of Love and Peace, was established in April, 1986 by the Women's Christian Temperance Union in Japan. HELP provides a variety of support services such as temporary shelter and legal help for women whose human rights have been violated and women who are in trouble. The majority of the women who seek support from HELP are from Asian countries other than Japan.)

### LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT

#### GOVERNMENT FUNDING OF ENTHRONEMENT CHALLENGED IN COURT

Opposition to the "Tenno's" enthronement ceremonies is not only taking the form of demonstrations and petition drives but is also being challenged through Japan's legal system.



A suit challenging the constitutionality of the use of government funds for the enthronement has been brought to the Osaka District Court. The plaintiffs claim that state appropriations, totaling 8.1 billion yen, for the Imperial ceremonies is a violation of Article 20 of the constitution, which calls for the separation of state and religion, and the Preamble which states that sovereign power resides with the people.

The suit was filed on September 21, by 987 people. On October 30, 526 others joined as plaintiffs in the suit.

Regarding the money that the state will spend on the ceremonies the suit states, "As taxpayers, the plaintiffs will be compelled to share in the expenses regardless of whether they want to or not. The state's illegal religious activities is therefore an infringement of their liberty." (Yomiuri Daily News, October 31, 1990)

Lawyers for the state counter with the claim that the act of state participation in religious activities is not in and of itself a violation of the constitution. The constitution, they say, merely guarantees separation of state and religion. Only if people are forced to take part does such an act constitute a violation.

Government officials claim that the ceremonies are not intended to promote religion but rather to preserve an ancient tradition.

State defense also claims that since there is no law giving taxpayers the right to secure a court order to prevent the use of state funds the plaintiffs don't have an "interest" in filing the suit.

Each plaintiff is demanding a token amount of money in damages and an end to government funding if such is found to be in violation of the constitution.

## RELEASED FROM PRISON

MOON IK HWAN - CHANG YOON JAE  
RELEASED FROM PRISON

Rev. Moon Ik Hwan, whose well publicized trip to North Korea in April 1989 (see JCAN #667, June, 1989) resulted in his arrest under the National Security Law was released in October of this year. He had received a seven year sentence. Although an official reason was not given it was implied that the prison officials were concerned about his poor health.

Chang Yoon Jae, CCA youth president, whose arrest was reported in the September, 1990 issue of JCAN, was also released, after receiving a suspended sentence.

The NCC/J celebrates their release and prays for the release of all prisoners of conscience.

## IN TRIBUTE

With the passing of two years of service as a mission intern of the Presbyterian Church in the USA, the JCAN staff will be hard pressed to replace the very valuable work provided by our colleague and friend LIANN AINSWORTH.

Over these many months we have grown together with her in service and have seen the creation of new and abiding depths of understanding and grace.

We wish to express our deep thanks for a job very well done and wish also to say that we know that God will be with her as she presses on to ever grander heights of mission in her home country.

JCAN STAFF - Munetoshi Maejima, Aiko Carter, Liann Ainsworth, Anthony Carter

